CANUCKS AIM, SHOOT DOWN DUCKS, PG 12

Sports pg 12

Canadian flies Falcons to playoff spot

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metro

NCOUVER • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2008 metronews.c

Celebrity Buzz

Sandler in touch with his inner princess

pg 18

3,000 stranded passengers sleep at YVR

WEATHER It could take days until flights are back to normal at Vancouver International Airport after the region's fourth major snowfall left 3,000 travellers stranded at YVR on Sunday night.

Despite international flights getting priority, Erin Shannon and Anthony Knezevic, who were scheduled to fly to Sydney at midnight on Sunday, didn't leave until noon yesterday.

After spending the night in the airport, Knezevic said he "felt like Tom Hanks" in The Terminal — a movie about a would-be immigrant to France who's forced to live in an airport because he doesn't have an exit visa.

Alana Lawrence, a spokesperson for YVR, said flights were backlogged in large part because the airport closed one of its two runways.

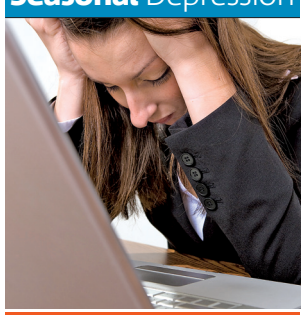
By yesterday, the second runway was reopened.

"We are still experiencing some delays and cancellations," Lawrence said. "Check the status of your flights before coming to the airport and leave yourself plenty of time for the check-in process."

She added that while the weather is clearing up here, there will still be delays on incoming flights from other parts of the country experiencing snowstorms.

KRISTEN THOMPSON /METRO VANCOUVER

Seasonal Depression



Economic woes impact holidays

Second in a two-part series, pg 3

Please recycle

Hanukkah **Celebrating the miracle of oil**

CANDACE WARD / FOR METRO CANADA

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, home in Calgary for the holidays, lights the menorah at city hall yesterday in a celebration of Hanukkah. The Jewish festival of lights lasts eight days and will end Monday, Dec. 29.

3 British Columbians appointed to Senate

Prime minister names 18 to fill vacant seats

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

B.C.'s minister of energy and an Olympic icon from the West Kootenays were among 18 new senators appointed yesterday by Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Energy Minister Richard Neufeld and Rossland's Nancy Greene Raine, who won a gold and silver medal in alpine skiing at the 1968 Grenoble Olympics, joined Tri-Cities educator and former Tory candidate Yonah Martin as the three British Columbians appointed to the Canadian Senate.

"I'm excited to go (to Ottawa) and talk about British Columbia," said Neufeld, who will maintain his portfolio until Premier Gordon Campbell appoints a new minister. "It's a great province and I'm excited to go there as a Northerner."

Neufeld, who lives in Fort St. John, spoke with the prime minister last week and waited on "pins and needles" for the announcement yesterday.

He will remain an MLA for Peace River North until he is sworn-in as senator in late January.

Greene Raine, a member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, has been chancellor of Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops since 2005.

Martin, the co-founder of C3 (Corean Canadian Coactive) society, was the Tory candidate for New Westminster-Coquitlam in the 2008 federal election.

"I'm excited to go (to Ottawa) and talk about British Columbia."
Energy Minister Richard Neufeld

In making the announcement, Harper, who has long supported an elected Senate, said his government would continue to push for "a more democratic, accountable and effective Senate."

"If Senate vacancies are to be filled, however, they should be filled by the government that Canadians elected rather than by a coalition that no one voted for," said Harper in a release.

Each of the incoming senators will support eight-year limits and other Senate reforms, Harper added.

MORE COVERAGE PAGE 6

In the news

- Broadcasters Pamela Wallin and Mike Duffy were also named to the Senate.

ShareYourViews
vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Plow crews 'do what it takes to get it done'

SNOW Drivers in Vancouver can expect side streets and alleys to stay slick and thick with snow as plows concentrate on keeping arterials and hills clear.

Another dump of snow is expected on Christmas Eve, and the city is already nearing its snow-clearing budget of about $750,000.

"I've been doing this for a very long time," said Murray Wightman, Vancouver's manager of street operations. "At no time has city hall ever said, 'Stop, pull back.' We do what it takes to get it done."

Plow crews have been running 24 hours a day, concentrating their efforts on major streets and bus routes first and steep residential streets that feed onto arterials second.

"The regular city side streets will not be treated by us … we have to draw a line here and keep the majors and bus routes free."

But the snowy side streets are fine with some commuters, including Pascal Wehr, 30, who cross-country skied yesterday from his home in Kits to his work on Main Street.

"It's awesome," Wehr said. "It's such an experience. The roads were snow covered and I figured that the easiest way of getting to work — as I do as much as possible — is self-propelled."

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PASCAL WEHR

Pascal Wehr skis to work in Kitsilano yesterday.

Free Daily News Group Inc., operating as Metro Vancouver Newspapers 1190 Homer Street, Suite 250, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2X6. Publisher: Maryse Lalonde

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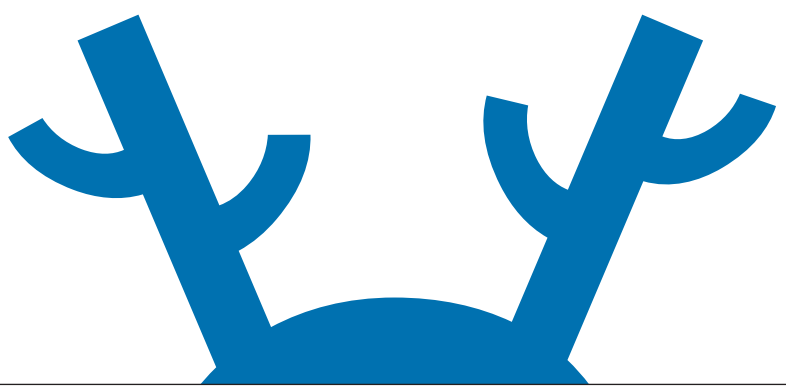

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- Sands Plaza

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You can still catch Bright Nights in Stanley Park
People who bought tickets for Bright Nights in Stanley Park through Ticketmaster but were unable to attend due to snow will be able to use their tickets on Jan. 2 and 3. The annual attraction features a train that rides through a section of the park decorated with more than a million twinkling lights. METRO VANCOUVER

Local

More donors needed

Blood donations are down as a result of the snowy weather, which has kept people from attending donor clinics, cancelled others and made transporting blood a challenge. About 11,000 donors are needed across Canada each week to supply enough platelets for cancer patients in hospital over the holidays. Clinics are open daily, including six on Christmas Eve. METRO VANCOUVER

Financial woes add stress

Holidays and sagging economy are a bad mix for some

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

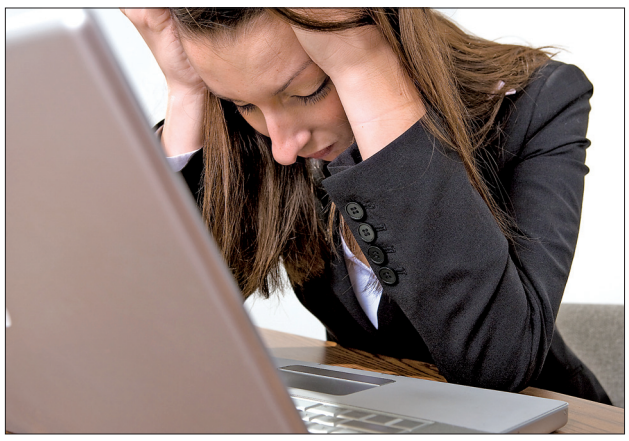
With many Vancouver workers dealing with layoffs or the worry of being let go in the New Year, the 2008 holiday season is turning out to be particularly stressful, which can lead to depression and anxiety.

Kat Ivancic, 20, who works in customer service at a downtown Vancouver bank, said everyone in her office is worried about losing their jobs in 2009, given the state of the economy.

She said while no one has been let go yet, the company is encouraging voluntary early retirement.

"I've seen some of my older co-workers cry over it," Ivancic said yesterday.

"(And customers) are coming in stressed out with financial crises, so customer service has got a lot harder … I don't want to deal with (this) stuff, especially at Christmas."



As the world economy tanks, the 2008 holiday season has Canadian workers stressed about job security, which can greatly affect people who are susceptible to depression.

Besides concerns over job stability, workers are also dealing with added workloads, low morale because of the cancellation of Christmas parties and bonuses, and the stress of having to tell family they've been let go.

To people who are susceptible to depression, these can all worsen their condition.

"Things that are out of our control affect our mental health," said Dr. Joti Samra, a registered clinical psychologist at Simon Fraser University. "(The holidays) are one of the worst times of the year to be worried about finances."

She said the best way to cope with the financial stress is to be adaptable and keep your family in the loop.

Dr. Connie Coniglio with B.C. Mental Health and Addiction Services said her organization has developed an Anti-Depression Skills at Work Workbook to address workplace stress.

She said listening to relaxing music, taking your lunch outside the office or moving around every hour will help.

The Provincial Health Services Authority of B.C. also has a workshop for managers to help them recognize and respond to signs of depression in staff.

METRO FEATURE
Seasonal **Depression**

Major coke bust at Canadian border

DRUGS Border agents seized 121 one-kilogram bricks of cocaine during a routine border inspection, the Canadian Border Services Agency said yesterday.

The seizure, made during an inspection of a commercial transport truck Saturday, has an estimated street value of more than $16 million.

CBSA spokeswoman Shakila Manzoor said the confiscation was significant.

METRO VANCOUVER

Crisis centre reports sharp rise in calls

CHELSEA MIYA
for Metro Canada

The crisis help line at the Distress Centres of Toronto, one of the busiest in the country at roughly 120,000 callers a year, has seen a 22 per cent increase in calls about financial difficulties.

It's not bad weather blues but times of transition that hit people the hardest, said Karen Letofsky, the executive director.

"We've seen more and more people calling about suicide," said Letofsky. "Depression, heightened anxiety, fear of failure, fear of the future, wishing they could escape everything that's happening around them."

Letofsky said the worst fallout is yet to come, as the realities of lost jobs and homes sinks in.

Within the next few months the intensity and frequency of calls related to the economy are expected to increase, she added.

Finding help

- Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of B.C. 604-872-3311, 24-hours

Miracle on 34th Street (1994)
cbc.ca/holiday
Tonight at 8 CBC

News in brief

CRASH A baby and a child died yesterday in a six-vehicle crash on a highway on Vancouver Island, RCMP said. Nanaimo RCMP said the children were in a vehicle that crossed the centre line on the Island Highway around 4:30 p.m. near Cassidy, CBC News Online reported. Eight people were taken to hospital.

REPORT More than one in four university-educated immigrants in Vancouver are working in low-skilled jobs 10 years after arriving here, according to a Statistics Canada study released yesterday.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Video Afghan army gets training from Canadians on Styrofoam battlefields at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Canadians could have the first coast-to-coast white Christmas since 1971 at **metronews.ca/canada**

Comment Allan Small on whether it's time to invest in gold at **metronews.ca/investing**

NHL Sundin selling like hotcakes

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

This Mats Sundin jersey (it was returned) was the only one left at the Authentix store at GM Place yesterday. An initial run of 55 jerseys went on sale prior to Saturday's 3-1 loss to the Chicago Blackhawks and another shipment was expected last night.

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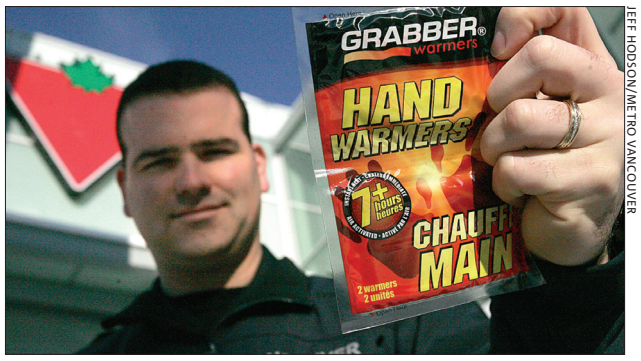
4 local

Two missing on Seymour Mountain Rescue crews were alerted last night of two missing persons on Seymour Mountain. About 13 centimetres of snow fell on the mountain through the day, with temperatures around -3 C. **METRO VANCOUVER**



JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Vancouver Const. Lindsey Houghton holds up a handwarmer to be distributed to the city's homeless.

Handwarmers going to homeless

DONATION Police officers in Vancouver will have another weapon in helping the city's homeless deal with the harsh winter weather.

The Canadian Tire at Cambie Street and Seventh Avenue donated its entire stock of several hundred handwarmers to the VPD, Const. Lindsey Houghton said yesterday.

The donation was prompted when officers entered the store this weekend looking for a deal on handwarmers to distribute to people on Vancouver's streets.

Rather than cut a deal, Glen Gillis, the general manager of the Cambie Canadian Tire store, donated the lot to the VPD.

METRO VANCOUVER

Spending up 1.5% in B.C.: StatsCan

REPORT Households in British Columbia spent an average of $72,620 last year, the third highest rate of spending in Canada for 2007, according to a Statistics Canada report released yesterday.

However, British Columbians only spent 1.5 per cent more in 2007 than they did in 2006 — the third slowest rate of growth in Canada for that period.

The average Canadian household spent $69,950, a 3.3 per cent rate of increase.

Albertans spent the most at $85,910, but this was only a 0.8 per cent increase, the slowest rate among the provinces.

Household spending in Saskatchewan rose the fastest last year, at 7.7 per cent for an average of $63,940 in 2007.

KRISTEN THOMPSON/ METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

CHARGES A Mission man appeared in court in Abbotsford yesterday to face drug charges after police broke up an alleged "dial-a-dope" operation. Richard Schmok is facing three drug charges.

COURT A 16-year-old boy pleaded guilty yesterday to hitting a man in the head with a skateboard at a bus loop in Langley, CBC News Online reported. His sentence includes six months' deferred custody, 18 months' support and supervision, 50 hours of community service and a 10-year firearms prohibition. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

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3343 West Broadway
2748 Rupert St.
1 - 525 Seymour St.
150 - 625 Howe St.
105 - 950 West Broadway
1707 Robson St.
1092 Kingsway
10 - 3490 Kingsway

Aldergrove
310 - 26310 Fraser Hwy.

Abbotsford
Sevenoaks Shopping Centre
2 - 32915 South Fraser Way
1 - 2142 Clearbrook Rd.
401 - 2140 Sumas Way

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214B - 4501 North Rd.
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111 - 3823 Henning Dr.
204B - 3430 Brighton Ave.

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Cottonwood Mall
103 - 45300 Luckakuck Way
11 - 45905 Yale Rd.
7544B Vedder Rd.

Cloverdale
201 - 17725 64th Ave.

Coquitlam
Coquitlam Centre
101 - 3278 Westwood St.
5 - 3000 Lougheed Hwy.
2700B Barnet Hwy.
22 - 2988 Glen Dr.
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7235 120th St.
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3 - 19638 Fraser Hwy.
103 - 19700 Langley Bypass
C104 - 20159 88th Ave.
19971 96th Ave.
C7 - 20202 66th Ave.

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135 - 12477 88th Ave.
2404 King George Hwy.
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108 - 7380 King George Hwy.
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10310A 152nd St.

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10 - 3189 King George Hwy.

OKANAGAN/NORTHERN BC

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Pine Centre (Prince George)
Piccadilly Mall (Salmon Arm)
Village Green Mall (Vernon)

Whistler
7009 Nesters Rd.

Squamish
38116 2nd Ave.

Canadian woman missing in China

There's growing concern for the safety of a Toronto woman who is missing in China. Ani Ashekian has been travelling for pleasure in China, with plans to go onto India, but her relatives in Windsor, Ont., say they have had no contact with the 30-year-old paralegal in almost six weeks. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada

Ontario negligent-driver bill rejected

The Ontario government is rejecting proposed legislation from Ontario Provincial Police commissioner Julian Fantino, left, that would make drivers pay for accidents caused by negligence. Fantino's proposed law would let insurance companies off the hook and make motorists pay for accidents in which they were driving aggressively in poor weather. Fantino says at least 40 per cent of crashes are caused because people are going too fast in poor conditions and not paying attention. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Husband gets life sentence for 'horrific' attack on his wife

CONVICTION Naked and bleeding from head wounds, Zofia Strojnik desperately tried to escape her hammer-swinging husband.

But she was too weak, and in too much pain. She made it out of their Mississauga, Ont., townhouse but was quickly dragged back inside, her hand leaving a bloody print on a patio railing.

Yesterday, Julian Strojnik, 57, was given a sentence of life in prison for inflicting a painful death on his wife of 31 years.

The former bricklayer pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in what Justice Bruce Durno described as a "horrific and prolonged" attack.

Under an agreement between Crown prosecutors and defence lawyers, Strojnik will not be eligible for parole for at least 10 years.

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Harper adds a blue touch to red house

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, whose minority Conservative government could be brought down soon, angered opposition parties yesterday by naming 18 people to Parliament's unelected Senate chamber.

Harper had promised not to make any more appointments to the Senate, which he wants to turn into an elected body.

The Senate, the less powerful upper house of Parliament, is now dominated by the opposition Liberals, whom Harper accuses of blocking, or watering down, government legislation.

Government officials had telegraphed Harper's appointments, arguing that if the government were brought down in the House of Commons over a budget set to be delivered on Jan. 27, his rivals would then be able to stuff the 105-seat Senate with their own candidates.

"Our government will continue to push for a more democratic, accountable and effective Senate. If Senate vacancies are to be filled, however, they should be filled by the government that Canadians elected rather than by a coalition that no one voted for," Harper said in a statement.

David Christopherson, an MP for the New Democrats, accused Harper of breaking his word on making Senate appointments and said the move would cost $8 million at a time when the economy was suffering.

"These 18 patronage appointments show that when it comes to job creation, Mr. Harper cares more about rewarding his Conservative friends than creating jobs for Canadians."
NDP MP David Christopherson

"Mr. Harper should be focused on the 71,000 Canadians who lost their jobs last month," he said in a statement.

"These 18 patronage appointments show that when it comes to job creation, Mr. Harper cares more about rewarding his Conservative friends than creating jobs for Canadians."

The CBC said it was the largest number of senatorial appointments made in a single day in Canadian history.

"There were so many vacancies in the Senate that it wasn't able to function," said Steven Fletcher, the junior government minister in charge of democratic reform.

"We had an unelected body blocking legislation from an elected body — the House of Commons — and it wasn't a sustainable situation," he told CBC.

REUTERS

News in brief

CRASH Avalanche concerns forced police officials in Colorado's Costilla County to call off their recovery efforts after a Calgary-based Beechcraft 58P Baron airplane crashed Saturday night, killing both the man and woman inside, according to U.S. officials. The plane, registered to Calgary firm MaurOil International, stopped for fuel at Pueblo Airport on Saturday night and then dropped off the radar around 7:50 p.m., said the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's Allen Kenitzer. MaurOil founder and president Gerrit Maureau was married to Sheila Malm, a Calgary family physician, and his company's website lists "flying" as one of his hobbies. The site also said Maureau "owns a Beechcraft 58P Baron." When contacted, the Malm family asked for their privacy to be respected.

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Aberdeen Centre
Blundell Centre
Richmond Centre
Sands Plaza

SQUAMISH
40446 Government Rd.

SURREY
13630 – 72 Ave.
Guildford Town Centre
Nordel Crossing
Panorama Village
Semiahmoo Shopping Centre

VANCOUVER
567 Seymour St.
698 West Broadway
1008 West Georgia St.
1100 Robson St.
1588 West Broadway
1709 Lonsdale Ave.
2154 West 4th
2315 West 41st
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Chinatown Plaza
Lynn Valley
Oakridge Centre
Pacific Centre
Park Royal North
Park Royal South

VERNON
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Anonymous bomb threat forces plane turnaround in Athens

An Aeroflot flight from Athens to Moscow turned back in midair yesterday after receiving an anonymous bomb threat, but no explosives were found after police searched the plane. The Airbus A-319 carrying 49 passengers had been flying for about an hour when officials ordered it to turn back. REUTERS

World

Green Christmases more common

The odds of a white Christmas in temperate parts of the northern hemisphere have diminished in the last century and will likely decline further by 2100, experts said. Even though heavy snow this year will guarantee a white Christmas in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America, a 0.7 C rise in world temperatures since 1900 and projected bigger rises by 2100 suggest an inexorable trend. REUTERS

Russia plans military boost

Russia plans a massive increase in its weapons procurement for three years beginning in 2009, with 300 tanks, 14 warships and almost 50 airplanes on the shopping list, a senior government official said yesterday.

Vladislav Putilin, deputy head of the military-industrial commission, told journalists after a cabinet meeting the government planned to allocate 4 trillion roubles ($141.5 billion US) in 2009-11 to modernize its army.

The move comes after Russia's five-day war with neighbouring Georgia. Russia won, but the combat exposed a Soviet-style army with obsolete equipment, poorly coordinated command, outdated communications and a lack of spy drones and high-precision bombs.

Putilin said that over the three-year period Russia's armed forces would receive more than 400 new types of weapons, including 48 aircraft, six spy drones, 60 helicopters, 14 warships, 300 tanks and more than 2,000 auto vehicles. REUTERS

Longer terms OK'd

- Russian parliament unanimously approved extending presidential terms yesterday, an amendment which has fuelled speculation that Vladimir Putin will return as head of state.

Spain **Winning the big one**

REUTERS/ALBERT GEA

Monica Torras, an employee of a ticket office that sold part of the winning number of El Gordo ("the big one"), one of the world's richest lotteries, sprays champagne at a lottery office in Barcelona yesterday. The prize of 2.3 billion euros ($3.9 billion US) is split into thousands of prizes.

Obama's green team set to bloom

ENERGY U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's new "green dream team" is committed to battling climate change and ready to push for big policy reforms, environmental advocates said yesterday.

Among Obama's picks are Nobel physics laureate Stephen Chu, who will head the Energy Department, and former environmental lawyer and U.S. Senator Ken Salazar as Interior secretary.

Obama has pledged to create 5 million green jobs and invest $150 billion US in renewable energy over the next decade. REUTERS

News in brief

ANIMALS A pig that survived 36 days buried in the rubble of May's massive Sichuan earthquake, living off charcoal and rainwater, has been voted China's favourite animal in a recent poll, but the attention has made him fat and bad-tempered, state media said.

NEW JERSEY Five men were convicted yesterday of conspiracy to kill U.S. soldiers in a planned attack on an army base in New Jersey that prosecutors described as a bid to wage Islamist holy war against America. The U.S. attorney said he would seek life sentences for the five foreign-born defendants. REUTERS

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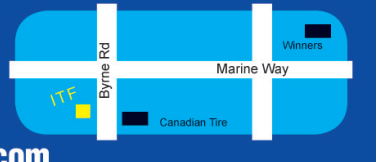

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Comment & Views

Comment

'08 as ugly as they come

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

As years go, they don't get much uglier than 2008. The economy started on a long and likely brutal plunge. The never-ending war in Afghanistan showed no signs of closure. We had yet another election which was dispiriting in almost every sense.

In this 21st-century version of open democracy, we had the Governor General make a critical call on our political future without a word of explanation for her decision. We had a Conservative government, which normally stands broad-shouldered against deficits, usher in a period of deficits.

We had a government which stands for high ethics and transparency give us the Cadman affair, NAFTAgate, Maxime Bernier and Boobgate, the in and out affair, the shutting down of Parliament and election campaign ads featuring defecating birds.

Despite the Conservatives' repeated attempts at self-destruction, we had an opposition party so feeble that it actually lost ground against them. The Liberal leader hit new lows on the hapless meter, showing himself even incapable of producing a nationally televised video of himself that was in focus.

It was supposed to be the year in which we addressed the pressing matter of global warming. By year's end, green was pretty much forgotten and we'd moved on to other bruise-like colours.

We had a celebrated war general, Rick Hillier, who decided, just at the moment he was perhaps most needed, to call it a day. This not-so-old general faded away for no good reason and enthusiasm for our men and women in arms faded as well.

The year featured a prime minister more interested in playing political poker than in showing inspirational leadership.

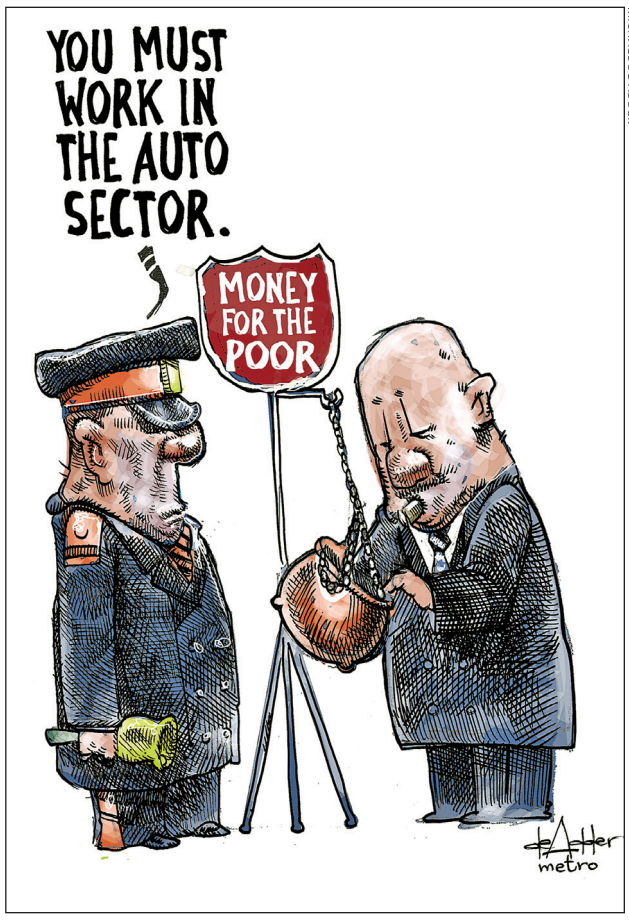
The year featured a prime minister more interested in playing political poker than in showing inspirational leadership on the major issues of our times. Stephen Harper closed down Parliament twice, once claiming it was dysfunctional when in fact he had gotten his way in the Commons almost every time. A second bolting of the doors came when Parliament threatened to dysfunction him, forcing the PM to rush off to Rideau Hall to beg for salvation.

The fiasco that was the government's economic statement typified our year in the dumps. Here we were, on the edge of a global economic meltdown, and the finance minister could do nothing better than play cheap politics with it, bringing forward a policy which threatened to starve opposing parties of financing. That in turn somehow led to a spectacularly unedifying east-versus-west debate about separatists at the gates.

It was a suitably depressing capper to a relentlessly depressing political year.

In the nation's capital, the one good thing about '08 is that '09 can hardly get worse.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

'Powerful' message from Zambia

Tanya Kim

I returned from my first trip to Zambia recently. Taking time from my hosting duties with CTV's eTalk, I had the honour and privilege of working with CARE Canada. This non-profit organization launched the I Am Powerful campaign, which is committed to empowering women in the fight against global poverty.

In the communities we visited, I saw that with the right tools and training, combined with hard work and determination, women are able to lift themselves, their families and their communities out of complete depths of despair and poverty.

On my journey, I met extraordinary Zambian women who define what it means to be powerful. They are strong, humble and exhibit fierce resilience in situations where they could easily be defeated. They showed me what it means to be a part of a community. From village to village, I saw women working together in support of each other — from building dams, to farming their gardens, to feeding malnourished children … I feel so blessed to have experienced why the I Am Powerful initiative exists.

There is so much joy, so much pure beauty in Zambia! With so many negative images of extreme poverty associated with Africa, I am thankful that I was able to encounter a more hopeful view. In so many of the villages, we were greeted with welcome songs. The universal language of smile and song was always present, and although I was miles away from home, I felt accepted as a dear friend.

ETalk host Tanya Kim with her Zambian friends.

My goal in working with CARE on this adventure was to bring hope and inspiration to the people I met in Zambia. But instead, it was I who was filled with hope and inspiration after being so warmly welcomed into the lives and hearts of so many. The journey reminded me of the power that strength, hard work, and determination can have on making my life better.

One of the most touching moments for me was during a visit to a gardening collective. The women proudly showed me the rows of maize, potatoes and onions they were growing, and danced with joy at sharing the results of their hard work. The group sells the produce, pouring all of the profits back into helping their communities.

I left Zambia with a renewed sense of the importance of passion for your work and compassion for others. I am so fortunate to have a career I love, close family and friends, and I am reinvigorated to continue working to help the people around me. We all have a role to play in the fight against poverty. Every little bit helps in making a difference.

Tanya Kim is the host of eTalk and one of Canada's leading authorities on music and popular culture.

Letters

Decision to bail out Big Three appalling

I am writing as a concerned Canadian who is appalled by the decision to bail out the Big Three in Canada and the U.S.

I understand the role these companies play in providing jobs, and therefore their role in the greater economy. But I feel it is unjust to support them by taking from the pockets of working Canadians.

Free-market capitalism, as I understand it, dictates that producers must supply a product to the market that meets a demand, thereby securing profit and allowing said producers to remain in the marketplace, independent of government intervention. This is the same fiscal model the Conservative government of Canada endorses as a justification for the failure to address rampant homelessness, poverty and ecological irresponsibility.

Perhaps the government should, rather than handing out taxpayers' money, suggest that the Big Three work toward developing more affordable, sustainable and marketable products.

If not, perhaps it should admit that these bailout packages are in fact a move toward market socialism and work to diminish the widening gap between the rich and poor in this country.

RUSSELL MCGEE, EDMONTON

Our troops in Afghanistan deserve more credit

It would be nice if Canadian troops in Afghanistan got a little more credit for the hard and dangerous work they are doing.

Since 9-11, it seems Canada is the only country that is taking the job seriously of repairing Afghanistan and rooting out the Taliban and al-Qaida. Yet despite our long effort, nobody on the international stage seems to be giving Canadians any credit for our excellent job in anti-terrorism.

Even when the RCMP prevented the alleged terrorist plans in Toronto, there was no credit from other nations on our work.

I honestly think nations like the U.S. and Great Britain could learn a thing or two from Canadians on how to handle terrorism.

GEOFFREY DONOVAN STINES, TORONTO

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Moscow to oversee signing of 'gas OPEC' charter
Russia will oversee the creation of a more formal group of gas-exporting states today, further unsettling energy consumers worried by Moscow's clash with Kiev over gas and by its closer ties with oil body OPEC. REUTERS

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Recession mindset fuels consumer slide

Consumer confidence in Canada dropped for a third consecutive month in December, hitting a 27-year low as a "psychology of recession" tightened its grip on Canadians, the Conference Board of Canada said yesterday.

The index in December fell to 67.7 from 71 in November, the lowest mark since the 63 recorded during the recession of 1981-82. The index was 100 in 2002.

"Consumers continue to be gloomy about their financial situation, indicating that they are financially worse off today than they were six months ago. Similarly, they expect to be worse off six months from now," Conference Board chief economist Glen Hodgson told a news conference.

"Consumers continue to be gloomy ... indicating that they are financially worse off today than they were six months ago."
Glen Hodgson

He also said the board was revising its forecast for 2009 and would most likely come out with a gloomier set of figures early in the new year.

The only bright spot was that a slightly larger number of consumers said now was the time to make major purchases.

REUTERS

Toyota sees its first operating loss

AUTOS Toyota Motor Corp., the world's biggest automaker, yesterday forecast its first group operating loss due to a relentless global slide in car sales and a crippling rise in the yen.

Toyota had been expected to issue its second profit warning in less than seven weeks, after domestic rival Honda Motor Co. also took the rare step of altering its guidance outside the usual quarterly reporting season, but the downward revision was bigger than predicted.

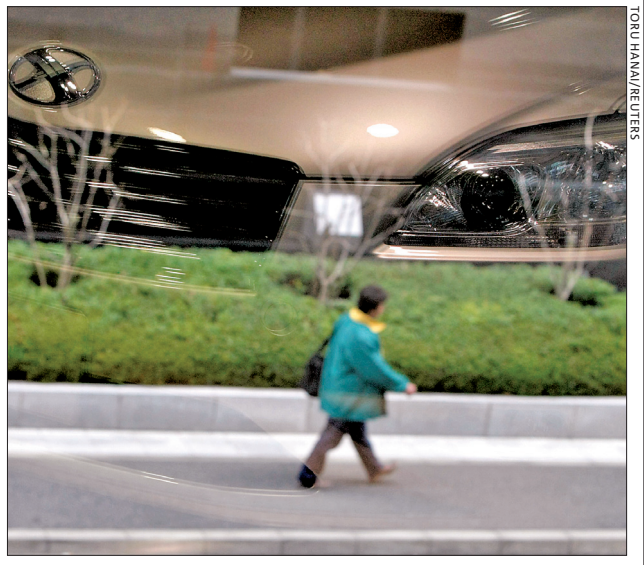
Toyota cut its group operating forecast to a loss of 150 billion yen ($1.7 billion US) for the year to end-March.

This came after the company slashed its group operating profit forecast last month by one trillion yen to 600 billion yen.

It made a record operating profit of 2.27 trillion yen last year.

Toyota has idled factories, slowed assembly lines and delayed manufacturing projects, such as the start of a new Mississippi plant under construction to build the Prius hybrid model.

REUTERS


TORU HANAI/REUTERS
A Toyota Motor Corp.'s car is reflected in a window of a Toyota showroom in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, yesterday.

In brief

OIL Shares in oil drilling firm Grey Wolf Inc. fell by more than half yesterday, reflecting a drop in the price of units of buyer Precision Drilling Trust, which expects to close a cash-and-shares takeover of Grey Wolf today. Grey Wolf's shares fell $3.27, or 51 per cent, to $3.09 at midafternoon on the American Stock Exchange.

BEEF The European Union launched a case at the World Trade Organization yesterday to test whether its restrictions on beef treated with growth hormones comply with global trade rules. The EU has banned growth-promoting hormones and imports of hormone-treated meat since the early 1980s.

FINANCING Electronics retailer Circuit City Stores got final U.S. Bankruptcy Court approval yesterday for $1.1 billion US in debtor-in-possession financing to provide liquidity as it reorganizes. REUTERS

Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

'Tis the season to give back

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Every little bit counts for families in need this season.

By now you've probably done your fair share of dodging crowds at the mall and most likely made the majority of your obligatory party rounds — gaining a pound or two in the process!

And as your thoughts turn to how you are going to complete the holiday shopping in time, it's important to take a time out to consider helping those less fortunate. We've compiled a list of ways that you and your family can give back this holiday season without taking up too much time or money.

Time:

Donating your time to a cause is an incredibly generous way to give. Choose an organization that is important to you and would be in need of volunteers. Maybe you have a charity that are involved with or you have heard of a local charity that you think would be a good fit.

Skills:

Just like we suggest you use your skills and experience to barter for products or services, you can also use your skills and services to give back. Some of us use our marketing/PR skills to give back to local organizations like Feed the Need and Quest. Consider a skill that you have that would be helpful to a charitable organization. Anything from working on an organization's website, to writing newsletters, recruiting volunteers or organizing fundraising activities would be appreciated.

Items:

At this time of year many charities prefer unwrapped gifts and food donations. However there are a number of organizations that will take everything from gently used clothing items to household items, blankets, etc. Contact your local shelters to find out what they need the most during the holidays.

Money:

When donating money to a charity, make sure they are a trustworthy and well managed organization so you are able to give confidently. You want to ensure your hard earned and generous donation is going towards the right thing. It's a great idea to contact the organization of interest and ask about how donated money is allocated and what the short and long terms goals are of the organization. It's also a great idea to confirm how much money you need to donate in order to receive a tax receipt.

If our wallets are feeling the pinch then you can be certain all of the organizations that assist others are also feeling it. Every little bit counts for families in need this season.

For a list of local charities in your area check out charity.com

Happy Giving and Happy Holidays!

Contact us with questions at smartcookies@metronews.ca. For more tips for saving and giving back, check out Smart Cookies Guide to Making More Dough, available in bookstores.

Tune in Wednesday night at 9 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

The week's column investigates whether it's a good time to buy gold. Visit metronews.ca

Plan now for long-term survival

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong

choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Q This past year has been financially difficult. Two years ago, my wife, newborn and I moved into our first home. If I used my CIBC RRSP shares for paying down my mortgage and the balance to re-purchase another stock, what capital gains will I pay? Can I defer my Homebuyers Plan repayment this year?

Sameer

A Spirits are definitely low this holiday season with stock portfolios haemorrhaging, real estate values declining and increased unemployment in the horizon. Although there will continue to be negative economic news in the media, 'tis not the season to lose hope.

You are not taxed on the capital appreciation in your RRSP but withdrawals will be fully taxable at your marginal tax rate. The repurchase of stocks will not reduce your tax burden and you must include, as income, the annual non-repayment of HBP.

Planning for what could be the worst recession in several decades will require discipline.

Increase income

Look for opportunities to increase your income. Ask for a raise, another position or more work (pay as well) at your current job. Second jobs can do wonders. It's more interesting than being a couch potato.

Consolidate

Keep no more than one or two credit cards. Why have temptations? Why pay interest on some cards at 12 per cent and others at 28 per cent? Get rid of the higher interest cards. Reduce bank charges on your bank accounts.

Pay yourself first

Arrange pre-authorized deposits directly from your pay. What you don't get, you won't miss.

Invest on a regular basis

Don't just invest when the stock market is booming.

Reach Henry Choo Chong, CGA, at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

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No suspense for top racing awards
Somebeachsomewhere was a unanimous selection for the O'Brien trophy, Standardbred Canada announced yesterday in unveiling the respective finalists for Canadian harness racing's top awards. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Cavaliers deny interest in VC

According to a report by CBS Sports, the Cleveland Cavaliers have denied they have interest in trading for Nets star and former Toronto Raptor Vince Carter. The Cavs are expected to be a player in the NBA trade market before the trading deadline on Feb. 19.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Canucks hold off Ducks

Penalties, Anaheim's ending salvo keep things interesting

NHL RESULT
Ducks 3 Canucks 4

DUCKS VS CANUCKS

SCOTT RINTOUL
for Metro Vancouver

THE SKINNY: Daniel Sedin's second goal of the game turned out to be the winner as the Canucks held off a late third period rally from the Ducks. Sedin turned a turnover at the Canucks' blue line into a beautiful breakaway marker to put the hosts up 4-1, but Anaheim made things interesting with two goals in 89 seconds with less than ten minutes to go.

THE SIN BIN: Both clubs lived up to their reputations as the league's two most penalized teams. Anaheim racked up 28 penalty minutes while Vancouver finished with 36 thanks to a late 10-minute misconduct from Alex Burrows. Both teams were 2-8 on the powerplay.

REUTERS/LYLE STAFFORD

The Canucks' Mike Brown is dumped by the Anaheim Ducks' Travis Moen during first-period NHL hockey action in Vancouver last night.

THE FIRST TIME: Rob Davison picked up an assist on Sedin's first goal, giving Davison his first point in a Canucks' uniform.

THE CENTURY: Ryan Kesler's first period goal gave him an even 100 points for his career.

THE PUNISHMENT: Todd Marchant was also celebrating a milestone by playing his 1,000th NHL, but the Canucks made him pay the price for it. Marchant was the victim of two massive hits courtesy Darcy Hordichuk and Davison.

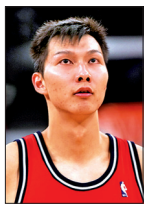
THE RATING: This one had goals, hits, fights and even a few big saves. 4 out of 5 stars.

THE NEXT GAME: It's off to California for a swim with the Sharks tonight in San Jose.

Questions raised over NBA player's real age

NBA A media report carrying school photographs and an identification card has raised doubts about Chinese NBA player Yi Jianlian's age, less than two weeks after 26 local players were found to have falsified birth dates.

New Jersey Nets forward Yi, China's fourth NBA player, is officially 21, but a cloud of suspicion surrounded his age before he was picked sixth by Milwaukee Bucks in the 2007 NBA draft.



Yi Jianlian

Yi has consistently refused to answer questions about his age. Suspicion of age fraud has long been a hallmark of China's state-run sports system.

A report carried on the Chinese website of Sports Illustrated magazine yesterday but posted on the reporter's blog last week showed a high school identity card carrying the name "Yi Jianlian," and birth date Oct. 27, 1984 — three years older than the NBA player's official birth date.

The boy in the photo attached to the identity card, dated Oct. 20, 1997, also bears a resemblance to the player. The report quoted residents and teachers in Yi's hometown in southern China, and in Shenzhen, his long-time place of residence, who cast doubt on the player's age. REUTERS

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How to turn him on

Men can be mysterious creatures, especially when it comes to what turns them on. Wouldn't it be great to know exactly what gets him hot? Read what real men say gets them in the mood.

Getting all hot and bothered starts with just getting together. Let your man know when the time is right and he'll be more than happy to skip out on a boys night out in exchange for what you have in mind.

Ask your guy to tell you where he likes to be touched. There are more than just the obvious hotspots. Even better, try to figure it out together.

Being confident in bed is sexy. Don't force something you're not comfortable with. Stick with what feels right and it'll enhance the mood for the both of you.

(continued online...)

To read more, visit lifestyle.yahoo.ca

Canadian GM flies Falcons to playoff spot

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

High atop the list of most excellent executives in the NFL this year — right up there alongside legendary league luminary Bill Parcells — is a former University of Guelph student who once served as a not-so-glorified gopher for the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Were it not for the worst-to-first ascent of Parcells' Miami Dolphins, in fact, Thomas Dimitroff would be a shoo-in as the NFL's top exec of 2008.

Last January, Dimitroff accepted an offer to become the Atlanta Falcons' general manager, a position several established NFLers flat-out rejected. The reason was that the Falcons were dogged — you should pardon the expression — by unprecedented nightmares last year. They were 4-12.

Their franchise quarterback — Michael Vick — was jailed because of his role in a dogfighting ring.

Their coach, Bob Petrino, quit after 13 games to return to college football.

Desperate, owner Arthur Blank turned to Dimitroff, who was scouting for the New England Patriots. Dimitroff hired Jacksonville Jaguars defensive co-ordinator Mike Smith as coach, acquired running back Michael Turner as a free agent and chose quarterback Matt Ryan third overall in the NFL draft.

All three flourished and, on Sunday, the Falcons qualified for the post-season.

"Never thought this could happen this year, never," Blank told Metro Sunday after Atlanta's playoff-clinching triumph in Minnesota. "This is the season of miracles, thanks to Thomas."

Those of us who followed the CFL closely in the late 1990s knew Dimitroff as a poorly paid (about $16,000 a year) front-office employee in Saskatchewan.

After an ordinary stint as a defensive halfback at Guelph, he joined the Riders for odd jobs, ranging from ticket sales to promotions.

Football was in his blood. His father was a football lifer. Tom Dimitroff coached and scouted in the CFL and NFL before dying of kidney cancer in 1996.

The junior Dimitroff grew up in Ontario as his dad coached in Ottawa and Hamilton. Tom Sr. continually advised his son to chase his GM dreams by paying his dues. Thus, Thomas did the Ordinary Joe Jobs in Saskatchewan, the World League of American Football, a Japanese league and then in Cleveland, where he spent much of his time literally painting the Browns' football field.

At 42, Dimitroff is through with behind-the-scenes work in football. He's front and centre in Atlanta, toast of the town, architect of an awfully surprising playoff team.

"I gave Thomas years to rebuild our team," Blank said.

"And he did it in months. He's a special guy.

"We're very proud of him. Canada should be proud of him, too."

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Pittsburgh at Buffalo
Toronto at Atlanta
Phoenix at Edmonton
Anaheim at **VANCOUVER**

TONIGHT'S GAMES
Boston at New Jersey
Atlanta at N.Y. Islanders
Washington at N.Y. Rangers
Ottawa at Philadelphia
Los Angeles at Columbus
Dallas at Toronto
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh
Nashville at Florida
St. Louis at Detroit
Carolina at Minnesota
Phoenix at Colorado
Anaheim at Calgary
VANCOUVER at San Jose

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Golden State at Orlando
Houston at New Jersey
L.A. Lakers at Memphis
Sacramento at San Antonio
Portland at Denver
Toronto at L.A. Clippers

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Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Money doesn't buy happiness: Study

Wealth doesn't hurt, but a sense of purpose means more

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

Next time someone in an expensive SUV cuts you off, take solace in this: Money can buy fancy cars, but it can't buy happiness.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MD studied happiness from a scientific perspective, including its genetic, psychological, sociological and biological underpinnings.

They found that it's not the almighty dollar that makes people happy, but rather a sense of purpose. This may be a good message to remember as we head into the holidays during a tough recession, when many have less spending money. Although living in abject poverty is not conducive to happiness, once you have the basic things you need in life, higher levels of income don't increase happiness.

Happiness can be measured — but not bought, scientists reported in the December issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource.

Your age and stage of life also have an effect on happiness. Middle age is a particularly stressful time of life, according to a study of about two million people in almost 80 countries. Mental distress peaks for women at around 40 and for men at around 50. Later in life, in your '60s and '70s, you tend to be more content. (Perhaps because the kids with their clutter have moved away?)

Social connectedness is another factor that increases happiness. This may help explain why women, on the whole, are happier than men. While women tend to join clubs, classes, and social groups, men — especially older men — often allow themselves to become socially isolated. Although they may not initially realize it, this ultimately makes men less happy than women.

Life circumstances cannot be ignored in measuring happiness: Events that occur — good or bad — definitely have an effect on well-being, but some people are quite resilient even in the face of negative circumstances. Genes play a role here, perhaps even accounting for as much as half of individual differences in well-being. Thinking positively, or seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses, may be largely genetic. Optimistic people tend to live longer.

Gaining more education boosts happiness, probably because it provides more choices in life. Not surprisingly, so does excellent health. Health and happiness are closely tied to each other.

Get active

- Want to be happier? Researchers suggest intentionally participating in activities you enjoy. It sounds obvious, but most of us probably don't do it often enough. **CELIA MILNE /FOR METRO CANADA**

Happiness can be measured — but not bought, scientists report.

When innocence goes up for sale

The J Spot

Saving your virginity until marriage is a personal choice.

You have to wonder how Mary got everyone to believe she was a pregnant virgin. Sure, that whole Immaculate Conception was a pretty clever ruse, but Joseph had to be at least a little suspicious on their wedding night.

I wondered the same thing when I heard guys were bidding millions to be 22-year-old San Diego-based Natalie Dylan's first. Earlier this fall, Dylan (not her real name) auctioned off her virginity to the highest bidder in order to help pay for graduate school to become a marriage and family therapist. Bids ranged up to $3.8 million. If I'm spending that kind of dough, I'd want proof.

But, the fact is, there's really no way to prove whether a girl has done it. The most popular idea that an intact hymen is proof of her virginity is completely false, says Hanne Blank, American historian and author of Virgin: The Untouched History.

Hymens run the gamut, says Blank, from thick and resilient to thin and fragile, making them easy to break in a myriad of ways and therefore lousy indicators of whether a young woman has had intercourse.

In fact, medical research isn't really sure why women even have a hymen. Some research suggests that it is simply vestigial tissue that is, tissue that possibly once had a function in a different evolutionary stage but has since become redundant, much like our appendix.

Unfortunately, says Blank, they found a use for it when men become landowners they needed to know who their kids were so they could hand down their property (known as the paternity-property hypothesis). The easiest way to do this was to marry a verified virgin. And proving that this flimsy bit of membrane was still intact seemed a plausible enough method of verification. Except, as mentioned, given its flimsy nature, the state of a woman's hymen is a lousy way to prove virginity. As result, people have come up with all kinds of ways to create this proof, like inserting a vial of pig's blood in the young woman's vagina on her wedding night so it would burst and stain the sheets or undergoing hymen restoration surgery, increasingly popular among mostly Muslim immigrants in Europe who want to have their virginity "restored" for marriage.

Saving your virginity until marriage is a personal choice made for health, moral and/or religious reasons. Fine. But undergoing surgery to "restore" your virginity or spending millions for a one-night stand with a virgin seems like a high price to pay for something you can't even prove. In the business world, this would be considered a really bad investment.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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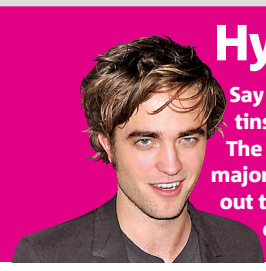
Madagascar 2 dominates foreign box offices

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa hurdled to the forefront of the foreign box office with weekend sales of $33.5 million from 56 territories. The animated film opened in 10 markets and was welcomed in the No. 1 spot by Italy and Australia, as well as Hong Kong and New Zealand. REUTERS

Entertainment



Hyped hair

Say good-bye to Robert Pattinson's sexy tousled locks. The Twilight star caused a major frenzy when he stepped out this weekend with a new crew cut. PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Cate ages with grace in Button

If movie fans didn't know she was co-starring with Brad Pitt in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, they wouldn't recognize Cate Blanchett when the film opens with a close-up of her in a hospital bed, as a withered old woman.

Cate Blanchett drew from her own experiences to carry herself from girlhood to old age in The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

The 39-year-old Australian actress, an Academy Award winner for her 2004 portrait of Katharine Hepburn (The Aviator) and a two-time Oscar nominee last year as Queen Elizabeth (Elizabeth: The Golden Age) and Bob Dylan (I'm Not There), disappears into another challenging role in Benjamin Button, which opens Christmas Day.

She undergoes a striking transformation as the life of her character, Daisy, unfolds over eight decades, blossoming from a sprightly girl into a beautiful ballet dancer, then growing old while the love of her life inexplicably gets younger.

Blanchett says much of the credit for her metamorphosis goes to the "unbelievable" talent of makeup artists.

But the actress says her own performance was informed largely by experiences from her youth — from childhood ballet lessons, to a close relationship with her grandmother and to her first job, at 14, serving meals in an old-age home.

"I would go in after school ... and the cook would have prepared the meal, and I had to dish it all up and take it around to the guys, have a little chat with them ... and I'd have to clean up after them and put everything away," she recounted in a recent interview.

In a memory that seemed to come straight from the movie, she recalled one of the home's matrons expressing consternation at having a patient move in to take the place of newly deceased resident so quickly that "the bed's still warm."

"For a 14-year-old to hear that, you think, 'Wow. That person's gone and someone else has come in?' Life really is a car park," she said. REUTERS

Mockingbird director Mulligan dies at 83

DEATH Robert Mulligan, who received an Oscar nomination for directing To Kill a Mockingbird, died Friday of heart disease at his Connecticut home. He was 83.

Known for his diffident nature and sensitivity toward players, Mulligan directed five different actors in Oscar-nominated performances: Gregory Peck and Mary Badham in Mockingbird, Natalie Wood (Love with the Proper Stranger), Ruth Gordon (Inside Daisy Clover) and Ellen Burstyn (Same Time, Next Year). Peck won the Oscar for his lead role as attorney Atticus Finch in Mockingbird.

He also elicited consistently fine performances from a range of his players, including Anthony Perkins in Fear Strikes Out, Jennifer O'Neill in Summer of '42, Robert Redford in Inside Daisy Clover and Richard Gere in Bloodbrothers.

Self-effacing with a nonflamboyant filmic style, Mulligan didn't receive the acclaim of such contemporaries as Sidney Lumet, Arthur Penn and John Frankenheimer. His films were more popular with audiences than with critics.

Some debated whether he had a personal vision in his films or particular "style," but he himself was dismissive: "I don't know anything about 'the Mulligan style,'" he told the Village Voice in 1978. "If you can find it, well, that's your job." REUTERS

Olympics special on NBC
On Saturday, NBC will broadcast Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony: TV Event of the Year. TVGUIDE.COM

Vanishing acts

Shows stuck in television twilight zone

Most TV shows exit the airwaves with a flurry of headlines memorializing their demise. Sometimes, though, a program fades from the spotlight into a scheduling twilight zone: Neither declared dead nor returning.

Here's the lowdown on some missing-in-action titles from this year that most expected to see again but which have no airdates on the horizon:

NBC'S AMERICAN GLADIATORS: Gladiators ready? No, gladiators are not ready. This competition-series revival enjoyed terrific ratings for its initial run during the Hollywood writers strike early this year. A second season launched in May and suffered a sharp drop in viewers, with ratings fading throughout its summer run. Most consider reality shows cheap to produce, but this stunt-heavy arena competition is not. NBC has not mentioned Gladiators on the record, but it's considered cancelled.

FOX'S THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: Another strike-era reality hit, this, too, saw a ratings decline during its summer run. Unlike Gladiators, though, Truth isn't very expensive, and Fox has shot unaired episodes for a new season. Given the troubled economy and the show's controversial content, sources said garnering advertiser support hasn't been easy. No airdate is planned for Truth, but with episodes in the can, a summer run might be tempting.

CBS' ELITEXC SATURDAY NIGHT FIGHTS: CBS planned four experimental off-brand specials and aired three, two of which performed well among younger demographics. With EliteXC declaring bankruptcy in October, though, the fourth special is not happening. CBS could align with another mixed-martial-arts partner but has not found or sought one.

ABC'S OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: This game show debuted in the fall and quickly was yanked from the schedule. ABC's insistence that the program might come back was presumed by the media to be spin to avoid cancellation so early in the season. But here we are, months later, and ABC still says Opportunity will knock again. The network plans to run off the remaining six episodes in the summer.

FOX'S 'TIL DEATH AND ABC'S ACCORDING TO JIM: Both are modestly rated, critically indifferent sitcoms produced by their networks' sister studios that fill schedule holes when needed. Death is off the air, but a midseason appearance is likely. Jim will leave the air shortly, and ABC plans to air its remaining 12 episodes in the summer unless called into action earlier. REUTERS

Pollan lands mom role in film

PEOPLE Tracy Pollan, best known for playing the love interest of now real-life husband Michael J. Fox's character on Family Ties, will star in a Lifetime Movie Network film about missing teenager Natalee Holloway. Holloway disappeared while on a class trip to Aruba in 2005. The Natalee Holloway Story (tentative title) is based on the book Loving Natalee: A Mother's Testament of Hope and Faith, by Holloway's mother, Beth Twitty. Pollan will play Twitty. REUTERS

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12/23/08

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Miracle on 34th Street ★★★ (1994) Richard Attenborough.				CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	Tube Tales	TV Made	Christmas Caper (2007) Shannen Doherty. (CC)				Inside Hollywood (CC)		News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	Corner Gas	Hollywood	Stolen Miracle (2001) Leslie Hope, Hugh Thompson. (CC)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Islam 101 (CC)		9B (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	The Search	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	House "It's a Wonderful Lie"		NCIS "Requiem" (CC)		Painkiller Jane (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Chasing Christmas (2005) Tom Arnold, Leslie Jordan. (CC)				The Mentalist "Ladies in Red"		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (CC)		Rediscovered (N) (CC)		Hates Chris	Friends (CC)	EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	90210 "Games People Play"		Privileged (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Home for the Holidays		NCIS "Requiem" (CC)		The Mentalist "Ladies in Red"		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Law & Order "Burn Card"		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	Shopping	Shopping	Crazy for Christmas (2005) Andrea Roth, Howard Hesseman.				Shopping
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Grinch Stole Christmas		Rediscovered (N) (CC)		ABC's the List (N) (CC)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Izzy and Moe ★★ (1985) Jackie Gleason, Art Carney.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	About-Money	Nova Frozen food, refrigeration and air-conditioning.				Independent Lens (N) (CC)		P.O.V. (CC)
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	House "It's a Wonderful Lie"		(:01) Fringe "Power Hungry"		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Frontline (CC) (DVS)		My Hero	Summer Wine	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Nova (CC) (DVS)	
	296	654	64 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	65 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 "Games People Play"		Privileged (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66 WGN	Basketball	WGN News	Family Guy	90210 "Games People Play"		Privileged (CC)		Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	67 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) The Biggest Loser: Families (CC)			Will & Grace
news	502	390	26 NW	Snowdon and Margaret (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Snowdon and Margaret (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	World Combat League (CC)		Hockey	Canucks TV	Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	NHL Hockey Vancouver Canucks at San Jose Sharks. (Live) (CC)					SportsCentre	2008 World Series of Poker		SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Mantracker "Simone & Mike"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Hot Import	Hot Import	Pinks	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Colombiano		Gol TV Noticias		Hallo Bundesliga		Paid Program	Kings Club	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Red-Nosed Reindeer		Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	Fries That?	Mystery Hnt.	Mystery	Mon. Warriors	Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Dennis	Gotta Catch Santa Claus		Stardust (CC)		Futurama	American Dad	Chicken	Rick & Steve
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Beren. Bears	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Gardens	Recreat. Eden	Sacred Music (N) (CC)		The Museum	Art	Operation Hollywood (CC)		
	575	583	20 CMT	Three Wishes (CC)		Live & Up Front: Doc Walker		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Three Wishes
	570	580	24 MM	Punk'd (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	Much Comes Clean		MuchOnDemand (CC)		MuchTopPop
	600	564	29 H&G	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes on Homes (CC)		Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Style	Colin-Justin
	615	520	31 A&E	Manhunters	Manhunters	Runaway	Jacked: Theft	The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		Manhunters
	628	584	32 SPKE	UFC Unleashed		MANswers	MANswers	Tenacious D: Masterworks 2		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Deep Space 9
	521	560	34 TLC	Dr. G: Medical Examiner		World's Heaviest Man (CC)		Mystery Diagnosis (CC)		Dr. G: Medical Examiner		Heaviest Man
	616	522	39 SHO	Recipe for a Perfect Christmas (2005) Christine Baranski.				Testees (CC)	Trailer Park	House "Human Error" (CC)		House (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	Tell It On The Mountain (CC)		Law & Order "Standoff"		Without a Trace "Legacy"		The Tao of Steve ★★★ (2000) Donal Logue.		
	601	562	41 SLC	End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada	Matchmaker	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	Dirty Jobs Turkey farm. (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Destroyed	Destroyed	Dirty Jobs Turkey farm. (CC)		How It's Made
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Light Sleeper" (CC)		Outlaw Bikers Expansion.		Ax Men "Black Friday" (CC)		NCIS "Light Sleeper" (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Zombiemania (CC)		Stargate SG-1 (CC)		Lost (CC)		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	47 TBS	The Office	The Office	Frank TV	Funniest Commercials: 2008		Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Raymond	Frank TV
	619	525	48 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210 (CC)		Planet Soap	What	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	King	Family Guy
	603	561	52 FN	Chef School	At the Table	Restaurant Makeover (CC)		Unwrapped Holiday treats.		The F Word (CC)		Chef School
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	King of Kong: Quarters		A Very Merry Daughter of the Bride (2008)			Zodiac ★★★ (2007) Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo. (CC)			
	581	566	101 MTV	A Double Shot of Love (N)		MTV Live	After	Next (CC)	Mom & Dad	A Double Shot of Love (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Man Who Saved C'mas		Origins of Christmas (CC)		The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002) Jason Alexander. (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Officina Italian	Qui si Parla	In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz	Euro. Journal	Patrol World

critics'corner

10th Annual A Home for the Holidays With Faith Hill
The country singer lends extra star power to the latest edition of the annual special that advocates adoption. As always, it offers true stories of families that have benefited from taking in a new member. Other performers include Gavin Rossdale, Jamie Foxx and Tim McGraw — aka Mr. Hill. Kristin Chenoweth, Patricia Heaton, Rene Russo and Martin Short also are scheduled to appear. 8 PM on CBS

Stolen Miracle
Leslie Hope ("24") has a pivotal role in this shocking fact-based 2001 drama about a mother whose newborn baby is stolen from the maternity ward of an Ontario hospital. She plays the police sergeant who investigates after a baby snatcher enters a hospital in disguise and tricks an unwitting mother into giving up her child. The cast includes Marnie McPhail and Hugh Thompson. 5 PM on W, 8 PM on CTV

Twilight's Taylor to be replaced in sequel?
Rumours have been running rampant that Twilight star Taylor Lautner, who played Jacob Black, will be replaced in the sequel, New Moon, tvguide.com reports. IMDB.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Amy's topless holiday splashed on tabs

PEOPLE Amy Winehouse, who's had an ongoing battle with drugs and erratic behavior since she shot to fame in 2007, is making a splash across the British tabloids thanks to her revealing holiday, where she was photographed on the beach and on her balcony sans top, popeater.com reports.

Still, despite the fact that the tabs are swarming over the nudity, they're generous with the compliments when it comes to Winehouse's appearance.

The Daily Mail says Winehouse "looks the picture of health as she piles on the pounds" in the new photos, in which it's obvious she's put some pounds on her once-frail frame. A Mail source says that Winehouse "has hired a personal trainer," and that she's "very enthusiastic about her sessions and bounds in to work out on the bikes, weights and Power Plate."

The Sun was a bit less congratulatory, running video of and describing a topless dance that Winehouse did on the balcony of her St. Lucia hotel room. They describe it as a "bizarre balcony boogie," saying Winehouse "was caught on video as she lurched from one side to another, waving her arms."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Sam hospitalized for depression?

PEOPLE Samantha Ronson is reportedly suffering from depression, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

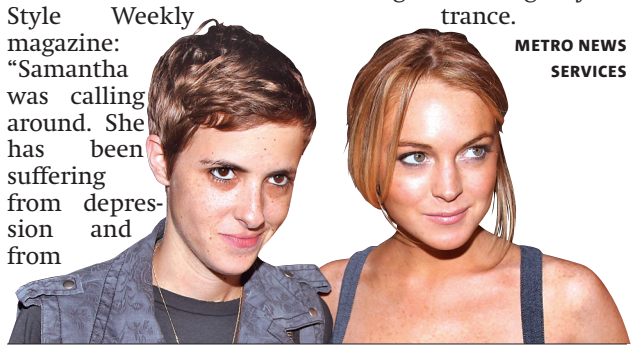
The 31-year-old DJ was accompanied by girlfriend Lindsay Lohan as she visited Los Angeles' Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre on Sunday — less than a day after it was reported she had been making frantic phone calls to friends complaining of stress and exhaustion.

A source told Life and Style Weekly magazine: "Samantha was calling around. She has been suffering from depression and from lack of food and sleep. Lindsay has been helping her through this as she has been through it herself two years ago."

Doctors were reportedly called to Samantha's home shortly before she visited the medical facility.

Despite her trip to Cedars-Sinai being described as "relatively minor," witnesses say Samantha was taken into the hospital in a wheelchair through the emergency entrance.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Sandler dresses up as a princess for storytime

PEOPLE Adam Sandler dresses up as a princess to read his daughters stories, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Bedtime Stories actor and comedian likes to get into character when he regales tales to daughters Sadie, two, and newborn Sunny, who is a month old.

Adam, 42, said: "I like to dress up as the lead character in whatever story I am reading. This is a little weird because my daughter loves the Disney princesses. But you'd be surprised at how good I look in a ball gown.

"I hold the storybook and make up my own stories with the characters. This backfired when my daughter started watching movies and realized that Cinderella didn't drive for NASCAR."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Nick Cannon's ex speaks out about Mariah marriage

RELATIONSHIP Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon's secret wedding in the Bahamas may have surprised fans, but it also caught someone else off guard — one of Cannon's ex-girlfriends, people.com reports.

"I definitely was shocked like everybody else," Christina Milian, who dated her Love Don't Cost a Thing co-star in 2005, tells Rap-Up magazine.

"I was like, 'Really?' It just seemed like a weird match," says the singer and actress. "But I was happy for him. I always feel like Nick works hard to get what he wants, whether that be women — that's how he got me."

Milian, 27, says she and Cannon "were so young" when they were together. She hasn't spoken to Cannon since he started dating Carey.

Looking back on their relationship, Milian says she has no ill feelings or regrets.

"He's a beautiful person," she says. "Regardless of what I felt in the past at the time, I actually forgive him and I'm very much over that."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Britney and Benji rumours false

DATING As one might have guessed, all those rumours linking Britney Spears and Benji Madden were completely false, popeater.com reports. The singers definitely aren't dating, Spears' rep told E! News. "The claims made by In Touch are completely false ... There is not an ounce of truth to any of it," she said.

Last week, In Touch magazine claimed Spears' father Jamie Spears and her manager Larry Rudolph set the two stars up on a few dates — creating an instant love connection. But have no fear. Spears isn't jumping back into the dating game with Paris Hilton's ex just yet, says her rep.

Since the release of her album Circus, Spears has been linked to several celebrities including Chace Crawford, Jesse Metcalfe and Michael Phelps. None of which panned out or have been confirmed.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Ritchie rebounds with heiress Khan

RELATIONSHIP Just as their divorce settlement was making news, Madonna's ex-husband, Guy Ritchie, appeared to be celebrating his freedom and the holidays with someone new — millionaire heiress Jemima Khan, people.com reports.

The two attended a London dinner party together earlier this month at the home of public relations honcho Matthew Freud and his wife, Elisabeth Murdoch, daughter of media mogul Rupert Murdoch, reports London's Telegraph.

Khan, 33, is the socialite daughter of Lady Annabel Goldsmith (for whom the London nightclub was named) and the late financier Sir James Goldsmith. In 1995, she married Pakistani cricket player, the now-retired Imran Khan, and they had two sons, now 12 and nine. The couple divorced in 2004, and she was later attached to actor Hugh Grant, though that relationship has ended, say British newspapers.

At that earlier dinner party at the Freuds' Notting Hill home, says the Telegraph, another of the guests was Trudie Styler, wife of Sting — and the matchmaker who had first introduced Ritchie and Madonna in 1999.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

'Boy' Beyoncé jogs incognito in park

PEOPLE Beyoncé Knowles likes dressing as a boy, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer dons male clothes so she can go running in New York incognito.

Beyoncé, 27, said: "I love being able to run in Central Park. Just me and my trainer. I dress up like a boy and then no one knows it's me. I just keep moving."

Beyoncé's latest hit If I Were a Boy details what she would like to do if she were able to swap gender for a day.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Matt details road trip adventures

PEOPLE Matthew McConaughey was rescued by an 82-year-old Mexican woman after his truck broke down, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Fool's Gold star was travelling with close friend Gus on the 14-day road trip to Baja, Calif. when the pair's vehicle ground to a halt.

McConaughey said: "We broke down in the middle of the desert while on that trip, in a place where we hadn't seen nor heard another human for three days. I had to jog down a dirt road for a couple of hours in hope of finding a trace of anyone.

"Well, I finally did, and her name was Matty, an 82-year-old Mexican woman who loaned me her 1981 Isuzu truck with 263,000 miles on it. That truck got us to a place where we could get the gear to fix my truck and get back on the road."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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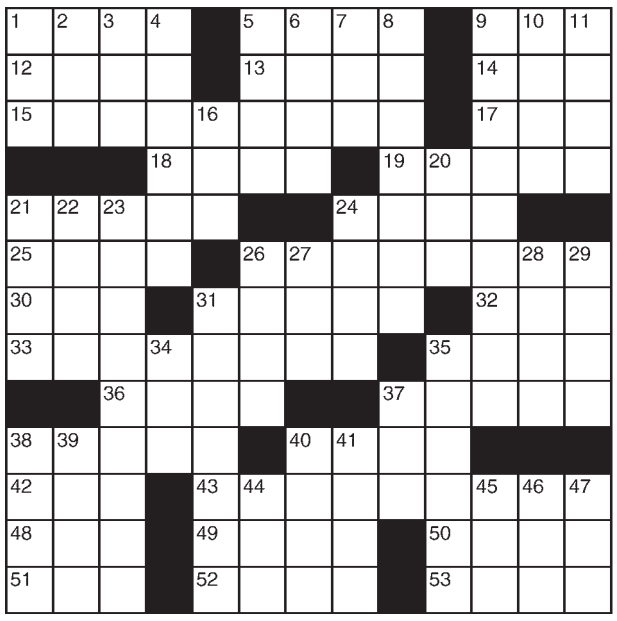
Today: Partly sunny 0° / -2°
Wednesday: Light snow 80% 1° / -1°
Thursday: Rain or snow showers 40% 3° / 1°

WeatherEye... Free App Available on iPhone.

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



Crossword across

1 Prompted on stage
5 "— the night before Christmas"
9 Perch
12 Geometry find
13 Colonial Nathan
14 Commotion
15 Yankee pattern
17 Not a lot
18 Drag behind
19 Song of praise
21 Recorded
24 Right on the map?
25 Oklahoma city
26 Times past, to Burns
30 Raggedy doll
31 Get the answer
32 — XING (street sign)
33 Nobody else's business?
35 Swallow, e.g.
36 "Once — a time"
37 Available
38 Beat
40 "So be it"
42 Sphere
43 Part of a gun
48 Time of your life?
49 One of HOMES
50 Tardy
51 "Le Coq —"
52 Campus VIP
53 Otherwise

Crossword down

1 Upper limit
2 Swiss canton
3 Still, in verse
4 Destroyed, as in hopes
5 By way of, briefly
6 Banshee's cry
7 Matterhorn, for one
8 Amount of ooze
9 Diaper fastener
10 Concept
11 Burg
16 Young Mr. Lincoln
20 Donkey
21 Squad
22 Domini preceder
23 ATM ID
24 Green-eyed monster
26 Crazy one
27 Every crumb
28 Dweeb
29 Vortex
31 Parodied
34 Antonym (Abbr.)
35 Bracelet type
37 Coop occupant
38 Frog's cousin
39 Therefore
40 Operatic solo
41 Carriage
44 Anger
45 Crony
46 "Monty Python" opener
47 Born

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	1	6		4				7
	8					6		
3		9		8	6			
		2	7			4		
			5		4			
		3			2	9		
			3	6		2		8
		1					3	
6				2		5	9	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

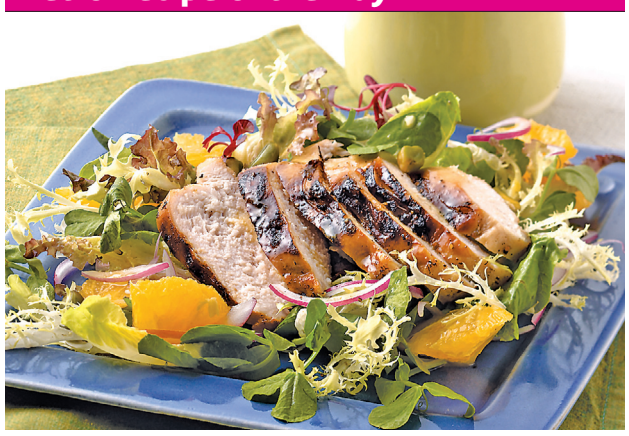
M	O	A	T	■	A	I	D	■	R	E	A	M		
I	N	V	E	I	G	L	E	■	E	T	N	A		
S	E	A	T	B	E	L	T	■	N	U	T	S		
■	■	■	H	I	S	■	O	B	O	I	S	T		
A	C	H	E	S	■	A	N	E	W	■	■	■		
P	A	I	R	■	N	E	A	T	N	I	K	■		
E	L	D	■	E	A	R	T	H	■	T	A	B		
■	M	E	A	T	P	I	E	■	D	E	L	I		
■	■	■	R	O	H	E	■	A	R	M	E	D		
E	X	T	A	N	T	■	D	N	A	■	■	■		
A	R	A	B	■	H	E	A	T	W	A	V	E		
C	A	R	L	■	A	N	T	I	L	L	E	S		
H	Y	P	E	■	S	E	A	■	S	E	T	S		

9	3	5	4	2	6	8	1	7
4	7	8	3	5	1	6	2	9
6	2	1	9	8	7	3	4	5
7	5	2	1	3	4	9	6	8
8	4	3	6	9	2	5	7	1
1	6	9	5	7	8	4	3	2
3	9	7	2	4	5	1	8	6
2	1	4	8	6	9	7	5	3
5	8	6	7	1	3	2	9	4

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Grilled Chicken Salad with Oranges

INGREDIENTS:

1/3 cup (75 mL) orange juice
2 tbsp (25 mL) lemon juice
3 tbsp (45 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp (15 mL) Dijon mustard
2 garlic cloves, minced
Salt to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
1 lb (450 grams) boneless skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
1/4 cup (50 mL) pistachios, or slivered almonds toasted
8 cups (2 L) or 5 oz (140 grams) mesclun salad mix
1/2 cup (125 mL) thinly sliced red onion
2 medium oranges, peeled, quartered, and sliced

METHOD:

1. Place orange juice, lemon juice, oil, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid; shake to blend. Reserve 1/3 cup (75 mL) for salad and 3 tbsp (45 mL) for basting.
2. Place remaining dressing in a shallow glass dish. Add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for at least 20 minutes.
3. Preheat grill to medium. Lightly oil grill rack. Remove chicken from marinade and discard marinade. Grill chicken 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm) from heat source, basting cooked sides with dressing reserved for basting, until no longer pink in centre, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Transfer to cutting board and let stand 5 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, toast almonds or pistachios in small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until light golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to bowl and let cool.
5. Place salad mix and onion in large bowl. Toss with dressing reserved for salad. Divide salad among 4 plates. Slice chicken and distribute. Scatter orange slices over top and sprinkle with pistachios or almonds.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Sincere gestures will make the difference in love. Time will seem to slither by. Being on the highway of love makes you dizzy.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Give something one more try. Retrace your steps to find a lost object. Do more than expected in order to be rewarded

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don't pry into anyone's secrets. An investment strategy seems like a joke. A nervous person confesses their true intentions.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A man feels like a fool for love. Someone's fickleness is creepy. There's no consolation prize if a full effort isn't given.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A pleased person makes an incredible offer. Don't throw in the towel when friendship hits a snag. Hold off making electronics purchases.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't wonder how things might have worked out. Watching a paranoid person causes problems. Facts will make you come to your senses.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Old friends are stunned by a revelation. Open all packages with care. A dental problem subsides for a while.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Somebody will remember to get in touch. A bully will take his lumps. Don't make life changes right now.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Your enthusiasm grows due to unexpected success. Count on a mating game moving fast. Help somebody make contact with reality.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Hypocrisy will be exposed by an accident. Don't mistake friendliness for love. The time has come for closure with the past.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
An accounting error works in your favour. A wise woman tells the truth. A good friend brings something special.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Waiting for something to happen will irritate you. Don't pretend to be an expert if you aren't. Embarrassment will limit public activity.

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Is without Bill Clinton's instrument (1)
2. Birdbrain's future stallions (1)
3. Wash out the color from a sandy spot (1)
4. Hugely tall NBA star Kobe (2)
5. "Laugh-In" comic Johnson's bashes (2)
6. One with faith in a mote-removing maid (2)
7. Stick-up stuck-up-ed-ness (3)

ANSWERS
1. LACKS SAX 2. DOLTS COLTS 3. BLEACH BEACH 4. GIANT BRYANT
5. ARTES PARTIES 6. DUSTER TRUSTER 7. ROBBERY SNOBBERY

12-23-08

This day in history

DEC. 23, 1893: The opera Hänsel und Gretel by Engelbert Humperdinck was first performed.
DEC. 23, 1954: The first human kidney transplant is performed by Dr. Joseph E. Murray at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.
DEC. 23, 1979: Soviet war in Afghanistan: Soviet forces occupy Kabul, the Afghan capital.
DEC. 23, 2005: Chad declares a state of war against Sudan following a December 18 attack on Adré, which left about 100 people dead.

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